



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 16, 2007

*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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TWO U.S. CITIZENS AND ONE MEXICAN CITIZEN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR SMUGGLING CHILDREN INTO THE U.S.

TUCSON – Jose Luis Quintana-Lucero, 37, of Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced today, February 16, 2007, to 15 months in prison, and three years of supervised release, by U.S. District David C. Bury. Quintana-Lucero had pleaded guilty on November 16, 2006, to conspiring to transport an illegal alien.

In an unrelated case, Margaret Ramirez-Garcia, 33, of Douglas, Arizona, was sentenced on February 15, 2007, to 11 months in prison and three years of supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Raner C. Collins. Her co-defendant, Margarita Santacruz, 20, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced December 8, 2006, to 11 months in prison and three years of supervised release by the same judge. Both women pleaded guilty to conspiring to transport an illegal alien in September 2006.

On June 20, 2006, Ramirez-Garcia and Santacruz were stopped in Douglas, Arizona, while driving a car with three young female passengers. After the agents had determined that all three children were Mexican citizens, without documentation to be in the United States, the two women were arrested. The women later admitted that they had been paid to take the three girls, a 12 year old, an 11 year old, and a seven year old, to the Denny's Restaurant in Phoenix and leave them there with a man they only knew as "Gonzolo".

On August 7, 2006, Quintana-Lucero presented himself for admission into the United States at the port of entry in Douglas, Arizona. Quintana-Lucero was accompanied by an 16 year old female who he claimed was a neighbor. Quintana-Lucero presented his laser visa and a laser visa for the female as proof of permission to enter the United States. Further investigation revealed that the laser visa presented for the female did not belong to her. According to Quintana-Lucero, he was going to be paid \$200 to bring the female into the U.S. and leave her at a store in Douglas.

The investigation in these cases was conducted by Customs and Border Protection, Douglas, of the Department of Homeland Security. The prosecutions were handled by Cynthia R. Wood, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-1255 (Ramirez-Garcia and Santacruz)
CR-06-1527 (Quintana-Lucero)

RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-050(Ramirez-Garcia/Santacruz and Quintana-Lucero)

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